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Review and implementation of the Concluding Document of the Twelfth Special Session of the General Assembly: regional confidence-building measures: activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa

Security Council
Seventy-first year

Letter dated 14 July 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Central African Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In my capacity as the representative of the current Chair of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the report of the Committee on its forty-second ministerial meeting, held in Bangui from 6 to 10 June 2016 (see annex), together with the following documents:

- Status of implementation of the recommendations of the forty-first meeting of the Committee and list of recommendations of the fortieth meeting of the Committee;
- Table showing the status of contributions to the Trust Fund since its establishment;
- Bangui Declarations.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 100 (g), and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ambroisine **Kpongo**
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative of the Central African Republic
to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 14 July 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Central African Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Report of the forty-second ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa

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Introduction

1. The forty-second ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa was held in Bangui from 6 to 10 June 2016.

2. The following member States participated in the meeting: Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda and Sao Tome and Principe.

3. The United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) served as the Committee secretariat. The Secretary-General of the United Nations was represented by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa and Head of UNOCA, Mr. Abdoulaye Bathily.

4. The following United Nations entities took part in the proceedings as observers: the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, the United Nations Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO).

5. Representatives of the following organizations also participated as observers: the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the African Union, the Lake Chad Basin Commission and the regional coordinator for the integrated strategy on counter-terrorism and the non-proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Central Africa.

6. The meeting of experts opened with addresses by the outgoing Chair, Gabon, represented by Mr. Alfred Moungara Moussotsi, Ambassador, Director General for Foreign Affairs, and by the representative of the Central African Republic, Mr. Cherubin Mologbama, Ambassador, Cabinet Director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Integration and Central Africans Abroad. At the suggestion of the outgoing Chair, a minute of silence was observed in memory of Nigerien and Nigerian soldiers killed in the attack of 3 June 2016 by Boko Haram terrorists on Bosso, a town in the Niger located in the Lake Chad Basin.

7. The opening ceremony of the ministerial meeting featured:

- Opening remarks of the outgoing Chair of the Bureau, Mr. Emmanuel Issonze Ngondet, Minister of State, Minister for Foreign Affairs, La Francophonie and Regional Integration of Gabon, read out by the Minister Delegate, Mr. Calixte Nsie Edang;
- A statement by General Guy-Pierre Garcia, Deputy Secretary-General of ECCAS;
- A statement by Mr. El Hacen Ould Lebatt, representative of the African Union;
- A message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, read out by his Deputy Special Representative for the Central African Republic, Ms. Diane Corner;
- A statement by the Prime Minister and Head of Government of the Central African Republic, Mr. Simplice Mathieu Sarandji.

I. Adoption of the agenda

8. The Committee adopted the following agenda:

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Election of the Bureau.
3. Report of the outgoing Bureau.
4. Status of implementation of the recommendations of the forty-first ministerial meeting.
5. Review of the geopolitical and security situation in Central Africa.
6. Promotion of disarmament and arms limitation programmes in Central Africa.
7. Combating armed violence and terrorism in Central Africa, including Boko Haram;
8. Maritime piracy and security.
9. Poaching in Central Africa.
10. Combating drug trafficking and transnational organized crime in Central Africa.
11. Thematic discussion: National mechanisms for the management and regulation of crises and tensions in Central Africa.
12. Briefings by bodies with observer status in the Committee.
13. Report by the secretariat of the Economic Community of Central African States on institutional developments in subregional peace and security structures and mechanisms and on the development of strategic partnerships
14. Report by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women on the status of implementation in Central Africa of Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000),1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1889 (2009).
15. Review of the financial situation of the Committee: implementation of the Libreville Declaration by member States.
16. Venue and date of the next meeting.
17. Other matters.
18. Adoption of the report of the forty-second ministerial meeting.

II. Election of the Bureau

9. The Central African Republic was elected Chair of the Committee by acclamation.

10. The Committee also elected the following countries as members of the Bureau:

– First Vice-Chair: Sao Tome and Principe;

– Second Vice-Chair: Cameroon;

– Rapporteur: Rwanda.

III. Report of the outgoing Bureau

11. The outgoing Chair briefed the Committee on the following activities carried out since its forty-first meeting, held from 23 to 27 November 2015 in Libreville:

– Transmission of a letter on 21 March 2016 to the States members of the Committee, reminding them of the following recommendations from the forty-first meeting of the Committee:

  • The importance for member countries that had not yet done so to ratify the Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and All Parts and Components That Can Be Used for Their Manufacture, Repair and Assembly (Kinshasa Convention);

  • The payment of an annual contribution of US$ 10,000 to the Trust Fund to enable the Bureau of the Committee to undertake activities under the 2009 Libreville Declaration;

  • The inclusion in the agenda of the forty-second meeting of the Committee of a thematic debate on national mechanisms for the management and resolution of crises and tensions in Central Africa.

– Transmission of a letter on 10 March 2016 to the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women requesting the preparation of a detailed report on the status of implementation in Central Africa of Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1889 (2009) on women and peace and security.

– Transmission of a letter on 20 April 2016 to States members of the Committee Bureau proposing a field visit to Cameroon and Chad to investigate the security situation regarding the threat from Boko Haram and address the issue of maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea. Unfortunately, only the Central African Republic had responded to that proposal.

12. The outgoing Chair emphasized the need to implement the Libreville Declaration through the regular payment of contributions to the Trust Fund in order to ensure the sustainability of the Committee, and urged members to actively participate in the work of the Bureau of the Committee between statutory meetings.

IV. Status of implementation of the recommendations of the forty-first ministerial meeting

13. The Committee assessed the implementation of the recommendations of the forty-first ministerial meeting using the attached matrix (annex 1).

V. Review of the geopolitical and security situation in Central Africa

14. The representative of the ECCAS secretariat presented a review of the geopolitical and security situation in Central Africa, as described below.

Background

15. The review (based on information from open sources such as the press and official reports and documents of the United Nations, the African Union, States members of the Committee and the Central Africa Early Warning Mechanism) covered four major areas:

- Political and institutional developments;
- Domestic and cross-border security;
- Issues relating to governance, the humanitarian situation and human rights;
- A country-by-country review of the geopolitical and security situation.

Overview

16. Since the forty-first ministerial meeting, the political and security situation in Central Africa had been marked by mounting political pre- and post-election tensions and the resurgence of insecurity in some countries of the subregion. Three main points were highlighted:

- The normal functioning of public institutions but also the fragility of democratic processes;
- A lull and consolidation of the peace process;
- Continued insecurity and escalation in some conflict areas.

17. As noted during the forty-first meeting of the Committee, although significant progress in the consolidation of democratic processes and the normal functioning of institutions had been observed in most member States, it was clear that the subregion had continued to be confronted with a number of political and security concerns, in spite of continued efforts by ECCAS, the African Union, UNOCA, the States members of the Committee and their partners to find solutions to those problems.

18. All of the above had taken place against a challenging international and regional backdrop, characterized by:

- Economic slowdown owing to many factors, including the decline in the price of oil and other commodities, on which the economies of the majority of States members of the Committee were heavily reliant;
- Economic recession affecting the countries of the South, in a context of failure of the Doha Round negotiations during the tenth World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference, held in Nairobi in December 2015;
- Ongoing security risks of all kinds around Central Africa, which was virtually surrounded by those threats;

- An unprecedented global migration crisis, which in Central Africa was reflected in an increase in the number of internally displaced persons and refugees, creating a veritable humanitarian crisis;
- Widening inequalities and worsening poverty, particularly in countries affected by conflict.

A. Political and institutional developments

19. The period under review was characterized by one constant on the political and institutional fronts in most States members of the Committee, namely difficulties relating to the conduct of peaceful and consensual democratic processes to which all national political actors adhered. It was noted that those processes had continued to generate tensions likely to jeopardize the social cohesion, peace and stability of those States. However, it was important to stress that in 2015 the Central African subregion had entered a long electoral cycle that would continue until 2018 and include some vital elections. All questions relating to those elections raised during the forty-first meeting of the Committee therefore remained relevant.

20. Disagreements over the rules of the game remained palpable. The most notable of those disagreements were no longer just post-electoral, but much more pre-electoral, although the elections themselves had been held peacefully and had aroused relative enthusiasm among voters during the period under review. The determination and consensual arrangement of election timetables had continued to cause profound disagreements within the political class in those States. Thus, no State member of the Committee was truly protected from an electoral crisis. The elections, designed to regulate sociopolitical life in States members of the Committee, had instead tended to be a great source of tension and even conflicts that threatened peace, security and stability.

21. All of that had led the Central Africa Early Warning Mechanism to note that, apart from a few exceptions, there was a real crisis of democracy in many countries of Central Africa. That crisis was characterized by:

- Handover difficulties, including within political parties in power and opposition parties;
- Instability of electoral rules;
- Difficulties in establishing democratic traditions.

22. The situation therefore required in-depth review by the Committee in order to find appropriate solutions, as Central Africa risked plunging into a cycle of instability and conflict in the years to come if nothing was done.

B. Domestic and cross-border security

23. The situation with regard to domestic and cross-border security had remained the same as described at the forty-first meeting of the Committee. The general situation was mixed, but highly worrying. The regional context had remained characterized by the fight against terrorism: a comprehensive and global phenomenon described by some authors as "world war four", the Cold War being the third.

24. During the reporting period, the war against terrorism continued to pose some problems with regard to identification of the enemy, means of fighting and the final aim pursued.

25. The fight against Boko Haram had been of particular interest in the context of the review. It was noted that Boko Haram had been weakened militarily, being unable to conduct large-scale operations as in 2014, particularly because of action by the Multinational Joint Task Force, in coordination with the defence and security forces of the States concerned. However, owing to the change in its operational methods, through the proliferation of suicide attacks, that terrorist group continued to be particularly deadly and had claimed more victims in 2015 than in previous years. Consequently, Boko Haram had consolidated its position as the world's deadliest terrorist group in recent years, with over 15,000 deaths, more than Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

26. Boko Haram had also become known for the extreme brutality and ferocity of its actions, with the cruel use of children, a situation condemned by the United Nations Children's Fund. Implementing the counter-terrorism strategy in Central Africa adopted at the Committee's last meeting had therefore become an urgent matter.

27. The question of negative forces in the eastern part of the Central African Republic, particularly the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), and in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, particularly the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) and the Allied Democratic Forces-National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (ADF-NALU), as well as insecurity at the border between the Central African Republic, the Sudan and Chad, remained relevant.

28. Apart from terrorism, Central Africa continued to face other cross-cutting threats, for example, the problem of narcotic drugs and their impact on security. If the scale of the use of certain drugs had led experts to speak of a genuine epidemic in Europe and in the United States of America, then the same could be said about local drugs in Central Africa.

29. At the same time, the use of "luxury drugs" and amphetamines continued to grow. One amphetamine highlighted during the reporting period warranted particular monitoring. Captagon was widely used by jihadists in Iraq, Libya, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey. It had also been established that Boko Haram used narcotic drugs for its fighters. Given that the collaboration between Boko Haram and ISIL appeared to be confirmed, it was likely that Captagon was to be found in the Lake Chad Basin area. According to neurobiologists, Captagon acted on the brain in a specific way and made those who took it fierce and almost wild.

30. Lastly, a resurgence of acts of maritime piracy and banditry in the Gulf of Guinea had been recorded during the period under review, particularly in the territorial waters of some countries of West Africa.

31. All of those facts demonstrated that Central Africa must increase its vigilance and, above all, intensify collective actions by strengthening cooperation in order to stem those internal and external threats.

C. Governance, humanitarian situation and human rights

32. The situation remained the same as described at Committee meetings over the past several years. The promotion of and respect for human rights, the practice of good governance and improvement of the humanitarian situation remained significant challenges in Central Africa. The continuing efforts of the States members of the Committee in that regard did not seem to be sufficient.

33. The fight against corruption remained a major challenge. The global ranking published for 2015 was enlightening in that regard. Although Transparency International's working methods were not without criticism and remained improvable and questionable, the fact remained that the rankings (Corruption Perception Index) published by that institution constituted a source of governance assessment to which many bilateral and multilateral actors referred.

34. According to the latest rankings, Central African countries were poorly positioned and were ranked as follows out of a total of 167 countries, from the most corrupt to the least corrupt: Angola (one hundred and sixty-third), Burundi (one hundred and fiftieth), Congo (one hundred and forty-seventh), Chad (joint one hundred and forty-seventh), Democratic Republic of the Congo (one hundred and forty-sixth), Central African Republic (one hundred and forty-fifth), Cameroon (one hundred and thirtieth), Gabon (ninety-ninth), Sao Tome and Principe (sixty-sixth) and Rwanda (forty-fourth).

35. With regard to prison administration, the issue of overcrowding in prisons and the conditions of detention and prison security continued to pose challenges to the Governments of Central African countries. In that regard, a framework for cooperation and dialogue on security in correctional facilities should be established in Central Africa.

36. Human rights violations were most prevalent in conflict areas. Rape, for example, had been used as a weapon of war. Paradoxically, the defence and security forces had sometimes been involved in human rights violations, including in countries that were not in situations of conflict.

37. The humanitarian situation also remained worrying in some countries of the subregion, owing in particular to the large number of displaced persons and refugees.

D. Country-by-country geopolitical and security review

Angola

38. Since the Committee's last meeting, Angola had continued to consolidate peace and stability.

39. On the political front, despite the economic difficulties caused by the drop in oil prices and its impact on socioeconomic life, the authorities had continued their efforts to modernize State operations. Those efforts were focused on the diversification of the economy to continue to implement the National Development Plan for the period up to 2017, largely focused on poverty reduction.

40. Election fever was already taking hold in the various political camps ahead of the legislative and presidential elections scheduled for 2017. Furthermore, the Government was considering holding local elections as soon as conditions allowed.

41. With regard to domestic and cross-border security, the authorities were continuing their efforts to consolidate democratic institutions, peace and national reconciliation. To bring the country into line with the continental order, the Angolan Parliament had authorized the ratification of the African Union Non-Aggression and Common Defence Pact.

42. Furthermore, the Government had continued the campaign for the collection of weapons still held by the civilian population and the demining of areas already identified.

43. The country had continued to face heavy illegal migratory pressure despite the regulatory measures already in place: legal repatriations with the consent of the countries of origin, expulsions of illegal aliens and border monitoring.

44. Lastly, a major epidemic of contagious yellow fever had rocked the country during the reporting period, resulting in nearly 300 deaths. The Government had made every effort to combat it, including through an awareness-raising campaign that had garnered broad support among citizens, who had been vaccinated, thereby helping to contain the situation and reduce the harm caused.

Burundi

45. Since the Committee's last meeting, the political and security situation in Burundi had been characterized by the status quo. However, there had been positive developments regarding the security situation, in spite of sporadic criminal acts.

46. On the political front, the incumbent Government and the opposition remained divided on the modalities for resuming dialogue announced in Arusha in the United Republic of Tanzania.

47. In the meantime, the perpetrators of the failed coup d'état of 2015 had been sentenced to imprisonment under the criminal law in force in the country. During the reporting period, almost 1,500 Burundians had been expelled from neighbouring Rwanda on the grounds of their illegal status. Relations with that country had remained tense during the reporting period.

48. With regard to domestic and cross-border security, the climate had remained precarious and worrying, with almost daily grenade attacks, ambushes and targeted assassinations against senior army and police officials. Clashes between law and order enforcement authorities and "armed criminals" were also recorded. It was in that context that Brigadier General Athanase Kararuza had been killed in Bujumbura.

49. The worrying nature of the situation had led the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights to propose sending an international police force.

50. The International Organization of La Francophonie had also adopted sanctions against Burundi. The Secretary-General of the United Nations had undertaken a working visit to the country on 22 and 23 February 2016 in order to encourage stakeholders to revive the inter-Burundian dialogue.

51. On 1 April 2016, the United Nations Security Council had adopted resolution 2279 (2016) and requested the Secretary-General to draw up a list of potential options to prevent Burundi from slipping further into violence. In mid-April 2016,

the Secretary-General had proposed three deployment options: 3,000 police, 228 police or 20 to 50 police.

52. Given the magnitude of the crisis, the former Tanzanian President and actor in the Arusha Agreement, Benjamin Mpaka, had been designated by the Summit of East African Community Heads of State, on 2 March 2016 in Arusha, to initiate new mediation efforts between stakeholders in the crisis. He was continuing consultations with political actors, who had been absent during the previous meeting from 21 to 24 May 2016 in Arusha.

Cameroon

53. Since the Committee's last meeting, the political and security situation in Cameroon had remained stable. On the political front, the preparatory activities for the electoral process had continued.

54. The ruling party and its allies had stepped up motions of support and calls for the nomination of the current Head of State, sometimes requesting that the elections be brought forward. However, the opposition was divided, with one party opposed to bringing them forward.

55. With regard to security, the country had continued to effectively fight against Boko Haram, moving from defence to offence. Collaboration between the army, self-defence groups and watchdog committees had proven to be highly effective on the ground.

56. Securing the common border between Cameroon, Chad and the Central African Republic remained at the heart of the recommendations of the extraordinary summit of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX), held in Yaoundé in February 2015, pending the scheduling of a tripartite meeting coordinated by MINUSCA. The planned meeting should reflect on the strategy to prevent connections between Boko Haram and the armed groups present in the Central African Republic.

57. Interoperability with the Nigerian armed forces had enabled the Cameroonian army to conduct operations on Nigerian territory, the most significant of which had helped to liberate the towns of Ngoshe and Kumshe.

58. In the area of humanitarian assistance, the issue of Nigerian and Central African refugees was a cause for concern. It would be advisable to continue the dialogue with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on the modalities for voluntary return.

Congo

Political situation

59. Since the Committee's last meeting, the Congo had entered a political and security crisis in the wake of the adoption of a new Constitution by referendum on 25 October 2015. The adoption of that new Constitution, promulgated on 6 November 2015, had repealed the blocked provisions of the former Constitution, but the change had been part of continuing the internal process of modernizing the country's institutions initiated two years beforehand.

60. It should be noted that a fringe opposition group, under the umbrella of the Front républicain pour le respect de l'ordre constitutionnel et l'alternance démocratique — Initiative pour la démocratie au Congo (FROCAD-IDC — Republican Front for Respect of Constitutional Order and Democratic Change-Initiative for Democracy in Congo) had boycotted the process of the above-mentioned constitutional referendum.

61. Although tensions during the electoral campaign had been deplored, particularly the incident of 17 March 2016 between law enforcement and the former "Ninja" Nsiloulou militia of Mr. Frédéric Bintsamou, alias "Pastor Ntoumi", the early presidential election of 20 March 2016 had seen the participation of all political parties, including almost all opposition parties. That election, which was conducted without major incident, as the Secretary-General attested in his report of 25 May 2016 (S/2016/482), had resulted in the election of Mr. Denis Sassou Nguesso, with 60.19 per cent of the votes cast.

62. During the electoral process, it had been noted that parties belonging to FROCAD-IDC had refrained from sending representatives to the Independent National Electoral Commission, established in accordance with the provisions of the new Constitution. Despite the legal provisions that required equal representation of majority and opposition parties and civil society, the opposition parties gathered under the umbrella of FROCAD-IDC had established a technical electoral commission, parallel to the Independent National Electoral Commission, responsible for centralizing and publishing the results of the vote.

63. Contesting the results, some opponents, who had claimed their victory, had openly called for civil disobedience. Those calls were now regarded as one of the factors contributing to the attacks that occurred in some neighbourhoods in southern Brazzaville, strongholds of the opposition, during the night of 3 to 4 April 2016.

64. The attacks by former "Ninja" Nsiloulou militia of Mr. Frédéric Bintsamou had caused significant material damage, including setting fire to police stations and the headquarters of a municipal town hall. The official human toll had been 17 deaths and many wounded. Those events had also resulted in the massive displacement of people from neighbourhoods in southern Brazzaville.

65 To address the situation, steps had been taken immediately to restore public order and the safety of people in those neighbourhoods. The attackers had been pursued to the department of Pool, where they had found refuge.

66. The armed attacks had confirmed at least three things:

- Weapons were still circulating illegally in the Congo;
- Weapons were still being used to resolve political disputes in that country;
- The risk of armed militia reactivating was real.

67. Tensions had also been exacerbated by the arrest of some supporters of leaders of the opposition for disturbances to public order and inciting insurrection.

68. In the wake of the tragedy and its negative impact, the Government had taken the following measures:

- The rehabilitation of burned down police stations;

- The authorization of a Caritas-Congo mission in the districts of Mayama and Kindamba, conducted from 14 to 17 April 2016, to objectively assess the situation. The report of that Mission had also been made public;
- The issuance of arrest warrants against Mr. Bintsamou and two of his alleged accomplices;
- The deployment of a humanitarian mission (Government and partners).

69. Furthermore, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa and Head of UNOCA, Mr. Abdoulaye Bathily, had undertaken a mission to Pool on 1 June 2016 to investigate the situation on the ground. That mission had been followed on 4 June 2016 by another joint mission between the Government and agencies of the United Nations system in the Congo, which would last until 13 June 2016, with a delegation from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. An evaluation mission of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights was also expected in Pool and would remain there until 13 June 2016.

Combating cross-border crime

70. From 8 to 10 February 2016, Brazzaville had hosted the twenty-third African Regional Conference of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), following the fourteenth session of the Central African Police Chiefs Committee, which had taken place in September 2013 under the theme: "Enhancing law enforcement cooperation in Africa: a regional response to organized crime".

Border issues

71. In the context of implementation of the protocol for common border management, the process initiated by the Congo was continuing in accordance with the African Union Border Programme, which had been replicated by ECCAS and which had a deadline of 2017.

72. Since the Committee's last meeting, border cooperation between the Congo and, respectively, Gabon and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, had developed to strengthen confidence-building measures with each of those neighbouring countries. Efforts must be made to give new impetus to border cooperation between the Congo and Angola.

• Congo and Gabon

73. In accordance with the conclusions of the first meeting of the joint technical committee of experts on border demarcation between the Congo and Gabon, held on 16 and 17 October 2015 in Ouesso in the Congo, the committee's experts had conducted their first joint field mission, from 28 December 2015 to 17 January 2016, in the Gabonese provinces of Ngounié and Nyanga.

74. Following the joint fact-finding mission, the experts reviewed all the points of contention that had been ironed out.

75. Furthermore, both parties had agreed, at the beginning of the current year, to open talks in April 2016 for the signature of an agreement on the delimitation of the common maritime border, in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the

Law of the Sea. However, owing to political timetable constraints, it had not been possible to hold that meeting.

• Congo and the Democratic Republic of the Congo

76. In line with the recommendations of the fifth session of the ad hoc defence and security committee, held on 24 and 25 September 2015 in Kinshasa, the agreement on the movement and establishment of persons and goods, signed on 3 June 2014 in Kinshasa, had already been implemented for several months.

77. Furthermore, the sixth ordinary session of the ad hoc defence and security committee had taken place from 2 to 5 June 2016 in Ouesso. Following a midterm review of the implementation of the agreement, the committee had adjusted some of the provisions of the voter card serving as a national identity card in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It had been decided to consider only passports, along with a free visa for resident travellers.

78. In addition, the report by the Monitoring Unit on the demilitarization of the islands along the river, resulting from the 1885 agreement, as recommended by the fifth session of the ad hoc defence and security committee, had noted a confirmed sighting of marines of the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC) on the shores of Mbamou Island, territory of the Congo. It had been decided, therefore, to urgently undertake demilitarization and to conduct an assessment of the islands along the river to determine their final status.

• Congo and Angola

79. More than 10 months after conducting an operation to verify the land and river borders between the Congo and Angola, from 17 June to 1 July 2015 in Cabinda, the joint common border verification subcommittee had still not held an evaluation meeting, which had prevented the continuation of the verification operation.

• Congo and Cameroon

80. After many postponements, both countries had agreed to hold meetings of the ad hoc border committee and the Standing Committee on Security in October 2016 in Yaoundé.

81. Prior to that, a meeting on cross-border trade had been scheduled from 6 to 12 June 2016 in Ouesso.

Refugee management

82. With respect to humanitarian action, the Congo hosted refugees on its territory who had mainly come from countries of the Central African subregion.

83. According to the results of the biometric registration and verification operation conducted between August and December 2015, the largest communities were composed of nationals of the following countries:

- Central African Republic: 27,415 refugees, following the crisis which had broken out in that country in March 2013;
- Democratic Republic of the Congo: 25,830 refugees, most of whom had arrived in June 2009, in the Likouala department;

- Rwanda: 9,469 refugees who had arrived in June 1997 from the Democratic Republic of the Congo;
- Angola: 557 refugees representing a long-standing community in the Congo that had settled in the departments of Pointe-Noire and Kouilou.

84. The remainder of the refugee population in the Congo was represented, among other countries, by Burundi (107 individuals), Chad (184), Côte d'Ivoire (710), Mauritania (63) and the Sudan (51).

85. The population of refugee women of all nationalities in the Congo was currently estimated at 63,763.

86. In the near future, tripartite meetings would be held to discuss the situation of refugees from Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo with the countries of origin and UNHCR, with a view to assessing implementation of the road maps adopted at previous meetings.

Gabon

87. The domestic political situation was characterized primarily by preparations for two important elections to be held that year, namely the presidential election scheduled for 27 August 2016, followed by the legislative elections.

88. In accordance with the laws in force in Gabon, the various administrations involved were taking the necessary steps to ensure the conduct of peaceful and transparent elections, in accordance with democratic norms.

89. Consultations among the various stakeholders in the country, including the majority and the opposition, were being maintained in order to ensure an inclusive electoral process, in a peaceful climate ensuring credible and acceptable results.

90. In anticipation of the presidential election, the Government was maintaining consultations with the international community, including the European Union, the African Union and the International Organization of La Francophonie, to ensure monitoring of the election.

91. Despite the substantial reduction of large-scale banditry, the defence and security forces were observing maximum vigilance, to ensure the safety of persons and property, the successful conduct of the elections, and to avoid any potential terrorist attacks nationwide, in view of the detrimental regional and subregional security context strongly characterized by the criminal activism of Boko Haram.

92. On the economic front, the Government was continuing its policy of diversifying the economy, in order to significantly reduce the high dependence of the country on oil and to free its development from the volatility of crude prices.

Equatorial Guinea

93. Since the Committee's last meeting, Equatorial Guinea had remained generally peaceful, secure and stable.

94. The major political event had been the presidential elections held on 24 April 2016. The date of the election had been agreed by consensus between the political parties.

95. That election, boycotted by one opposition party, had been won by the outgoing President by a score of 93.53 per cent of votes against six other candidates. The President had promised on that occasion that it was the last time he would stand for a presidential election. Bolstered by the political stability enjoyed by the country as well as its noteworthy contributions to African integration, Equatorial Guinea had chosen to nominate its Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Agapito Mba Mokuy, for the post of Chairman of the African Union Commission, on behalf of Central Africa.

96. Domestic and cross-border security had remained under control, despite migration problems such as foreign nationals who were illegal aliens or had committed criminal acts. The country was also facing an economic slowdown because of lower oil prices.

Central African Republic

97. The overall situation in the Central African Republic since the Committee's last meeting was part of a process of normalization. On the political front, the transition had ended on 30 March 2016, notably with the completion of the electoral process in line with the calendar established at the Summit of Heads of State and Government of ECCAS, held in Libreville in November 2015.

98. The twinned presidential and legislative elections of 30 December 2015, held following the adoption of the new Constitution on 13 December 2015, had had very high turnouts.

99. Thirty (30) candidates had stood in the presidential election. According to the official results declared by the Transitional Constitutional Court, the two leading candidates had gone through to the second round, at the end of which, Mr. Faustin-Archange Touadera had been elected President of the Republic, with a little over 60 per cent of the votes. He had benefited from the support of certain candidates, leaders of political parties and heads of civil society platforms.

100. The bulk analysis of those results revealed somewhat of a rearrangement of the political class, with little room for traditional majority parties, and a clear desire by the various actors to seek national reconciliation.

101. After those elections, the Central African Republic had set up a new National Assembly and a Government featuring several members of the Central African political class.

102. With regard to security, there was significant improvement. The announcement of the end of Operation Sangaris in December 2016 and the incorporation of elements of the French army into MINUSCA was based on that positive trend.

103. The Government was in consultations with the United Nations in order to ensure that the future mandate of MINUSCA took into account the fight against LRA, poaching and the circulation of small arms and light weapons in a suitable manner for a post-transition stabilization environment. That urgently required lifting the arms embargo to allow for the participation of Central African defence and security forces in stabilization efforts. The consultations would also expand within a bilateral framework for the revival of the tripartite operation between Chad, the Sudan and the Central African Republic.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

104. The political situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo had been characterized by:

- The election of governors of new provinces, further embodying decentralization aimed at bringing the administration closer to citizens;
- The decision issued by the Constitutional Court following the petition filed by 282 deputies, including 52 from the opposition, for the interpretation of article 70, paragraph 2, which stated that at the end of his or her mandate, the President of the Republic would remain in office until the effective installation of the newly-elected President. The decision had put an end to the political tension due to differences between political actors regarding the interpretation of that provision of the Constitution;
- Significant advances in the electoral process, namely:
  - The Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) was working to carry out pre-electoral operations, including the revision of the electoral list based on external audit recommendations from the International Organization of La Francophonie and the European Union, in order to meet the expectations of political actors, both in power and from the opposition, which considered that roll tainted. That was due to the fact that the roll did not include new adults or Congolese citizens from outside of the country and must be cleared of deceased persons and duplications;
  - CENI had already commissioned electoral kits and commenced enrolment operations from Sud-Ubangui province.
- The inclusive national dialogue had been convened by the Head of State. The facilitator, appointed by the African Union, was ready to start working for the effective holding of the dialogue. The Security Council had invited all stakeholders to participate actively in an open and constructive spirit in order to lead to credible, transparent and peaceful elections.

105. With regard to security, there was reason to encourage the efforts of FARDC, with the support of MONUSCO, which had significantly reduced the capacity of negative forces to do harm. The arrival in Kinshasa towards the end of May of the representative of the former Mouvement du 23 mars (M23) to fill his position within the national oversight mechanism, in accordance with the Addis Ababa Framework Agreement and the Kampala Declaration, was welcome. The continuation of the operation to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate former M23 members who had agreed to return to the Democratic Republic of the Congo was encouraging.

106. Nevertheless, the renewed activities of negative forces in the east of the country, including killings in Beni in North Kivu, was regrettable. The report by the United Nations Experts Group had attributed some of those killings to certain FARDC members. However, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo had vigorously rejected the allegations contained therein and demanded verification on the ground to establish the truth in order to ensure legal action against the perpetrators of the killings. It should be noted that, since the resumption of cooperation between FARDC and MONUSCO, every effort had been made to eradicate insecurity and identify those responsible for the massacres with input from

the population. The solution to the insecurity in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo required the repatriation of former combatants of FDLR, ADF-NALU, LRA, Al-Shabaab, Mbororo and other armed groups to their countries of origin.

107. Lastly, on the economic front, pursuant to the Addis Ababa Framework Agreement, a conference on private-sector investments in the Great Lakes region had been held in Kinshasa on 24 and 25 February 2016. The objective of that conference had been to define strategies to develop the abundant resources of the Great Lakes region through innovative and inclusive projects. After a long period of recurring cycles of violence and war suffered by the region, it was time to eradicate the illegal exploitation of minerals that constituted one of the sources of continued insecurity, in accordance with numerous memorandums of understanding signed by the member countries of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR).

Rwanda

108. Since the Committee's last meeting, the overall situation in Rwanda had been characterized by peace and stability in every respect.

109. The major political event had been the process to significantly amend the 2003 Constitution. The changes included the following:

(a) At the end of his mandate in 2017, the current President would be eligible for a transitional mandate of seven years;

(b) After that transitional mandate, in 2024, the presidential term would be lowered from seven to five years and would be renewable only once;

(c) Senators who had been elected indirectly for a term of eight years would be elected for a five-year term at the end of the current legislature in 2018.

110. It should be noted that that process had received the approval of all competent national institutions but had been criticized by some of Rwanda's bilateral partners.

111. On the diplomatic front, following its readmission to ECCAS at the sixteenth Summit of Heads of State and Government and its successful hosting of the eighty-fourth session of the INTERPOL General Assembly in Kigali and the World Economic Forum on Africa, Rwanda was preparing to host the twenty-seventh ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union in July.

112. On the security front, observers had remained attentive to the following facts:

- The presence of a recruiter for ISIL, killed by police in Kigali, following an attempted escape;
- The death of fifty people following landslides caused by heavy rains;
- Two attacks, in March and April 2016, on a police station in Rwanda attributed to FDLR from eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo;
- Diplomatic and security tensions with Burundi;
- Since the beginning of the political and security crisis in Burundi in 2015, Rwanda had hosted over 75,000 Burundian refugees according to data from UNHCR and other refugee institutions;

- The claim in a report by the United Nations Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo that the Rwandan army was training Burundian rebels. That allegation had not been confirmed by any other credible or reliable source;
- Following a misunderstanding between Rwanda and Burundi regarding allegations of training of Burundian rebels by the Rwandan army in the camps, the Rwandan authorities had requested the international community, through UNHCR, to resettle those refugees in other countries in order to dispel any misunderstanding or suspicion between the two brotherly and neighbouring countries.

Sao Tome and Principe

113. Since the Committee's last meeting, Sao Tome and Principe — an archipelago in the heart of the Gulf of Guinea whose insularity was both an asset and a potential risk — had remained generally peaceful and stable.

114. On the political front, the focus had been on the run-up to the presidential elections, scheduled for 17 July 2016. Independent Democratic Action — the party in power, which had an absolute majority in Parliament — would certainly want one of its members to be elected in place of the current Head of State who could also stand for a second term. Several candidacies had already been announced.

115. Regarding domestic security, there had been residual cases of criminality and banditry in some cities, including Sao Tome.

116. Lastly, Sao Tome and Principe must be more vigilant in order to combat the resurgence of acts of banditry and cases of illegal trafficking in its maritime area during the period under review. That might justify the acquisition of maritime safety equipment during the reporting period, with support from bilateral partners such as Brazil, Portugal and the United States of America.

Chad

117. Chad had remained generally stable and peaceful since the previous ministerial meeting.

118. On the political front, the country had held presidential elections on 10 April 2016 in a calm and peaceful atmosphere. For the first time, the technology of biometrics had been used with approximately 6 million voters. The outgoing President had faced 12 other candidates and had won 59.63 per cent of the votes cast. Popular enthusiasm had been observed on polling day. Post-election violence had been avoided and it was hoped that the same would apply for the legislative elections expected no later than the end of 2016. Moreover, Chad had chaired the African Union since January 2016.

119. On the economic front, despite the fall in the price of a barrel of oil and the resulting austerity plan, the Government had spared no effort to guarantee citizens their economic, social and cultural rights.

120. Chad remained engaged with its international and regional partners in combating terrorism, including Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin and jihadists in northern Mali. Following the attack of 3 June 2016 in Bosso in the Niger, in which 30 Nigerien soldiers and two Nigerian soldiers had been killed, Chad had been

requested and had deployed two infantry regiments (2,000 men) to strengthen the Nigerien army. Chad had been instrumental in the operationalization of the Multinational Joint Task Force, whose headquarters were based in N'Djamena. At the extraordinary summit of COPAX in Yaoundé in February 2015, States had committed themselves to providing 50 billion CFA francs of logistical and financial support to Chad and Cameroon in their common fight against Boko Haram. Those commitments were being implemented. The state of emergency in force in the Lake Chad region had been extended by six months.

121. Chad was surrounded by several hotbeds of tension, which increased the number of refugees on its territory. It was the third country in Africa, after Kenya and Ethiopia, to host the largest number of refugees on its territory, namely 750,000 people. Moreover, Chad had 130,000 returning refugees and 90,000 displaced persons. Women and children were the most vulnerable. In refugee camps in the Lake Chad region, explosive belts had been found on children. Taking care of refugees was proving an urgent issue to be addressed in order to avert a humanitarian crisis in the medium term. At the Abuja summit on regional security of 14 May 2016, States had agreed that the military response alone was no longer sufficient. Responses to development issues and increased support to refugees were essential.

VI. Promotion of disarmament and arms limitation programmes in Central Africa

Implementation of the Sao Tome Initiative

122. The representative of the ECCAS secretariat reported that, since the Committee's previous meeting, some activities relating to the Sao Tome Initiative had been carried out. The Initiative was twofold, comprising the Code of Conduct for Defence and Security Forces in Central Africa, on the one hand, and the Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and All Parts and Components That Can Be Used for Their Manufacture, Repair and Assembly (Kinshasa Convention), on the other.

Status of ratification of the Kinshasa Convention

123. While all States members of the Committee had signed the Kinshasa Convention, only five of them (Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Congo and Gabon) had ratified it. Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo had undertaken ratification at the domestic level but the instruments of ratification had not yet been deposited in New York. The deposit of only one instrument of ratification would enable the entry into force of the Convention and the start of its effective implementation. Sao Tome and Principe announced at the Committee's meeting that its Parliament had ratified the Convention on 17 May 2016 and that the President was expected to approve ratification in the following weeks.

124. Meanwhile, the ECCAS secretariat was preparing for the implementation of the Convention in the light of the specific responsibilities defined therein. The ECCAS secretariat was therefore involved in establishing national arms control commissions in those member States that still did not have them. In that context, during the reporting period, the ECCAS secretariat had engaged with the Regional

Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States, based in Nairobi, to encourage the establishment of national commissions in Cameroon, Chad and Gabon. A joint mission had been conducted from 5 to 6 May 2016 in Gabon and from 11 to 13 May in Cameroon. Moreover, the ECCAS secretariat had contacted Angola and Chad about missions scheduled for June and July 2016 to help those States adopt the relevant international standards.

Implementation of the Code of Conduct for Defence and Security Forces in Central Africa

125. That issue was breeding mistrust among the military authorities of the subregion. However, member States had mandated its preparation in order for the defence and security forces to be more national and citizen-oriented. The Code of Conduct had been solemnly submitted to senior officials of the defence and security forces as of July 2012. The ECCAS secretariat was responsible for its dissemination. The ECCAS secretariat suggested holding a meeting of experts from member States to summarize the remarks made and take corrective action before its political approval.

Related area: private security companies

126. Given the security concerns raised by that topic, the ECCAS secretariat had initiated the drafting of a white paper on private security firms. At the previous meeting, held in Yaoundé in July 2014, it was decided that for the final stage of information collection, national experts should submit a questionnaire formulated by common agreement. To date, some experts of member States had fulfilled that task. It was therefore decided that experts from the secretariat would visit national authorities again in order to conclude the work. The countries visited were Angola, Cameroon, the Congo and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Planned missions to Equatorial Guinea and Sao Tome and Principe had not been carried out owing to a lack of financial resources.

Implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty

127. The representative of the ECCAS secretariat said that the Arms Trade Treaty had entered into force on 24 December 2014, following the deposit of the fiftieth instrument of ratification to the United Nations Secretary-General. All States members of the Committee had signed the Treaty, with the exception of Equatorial Guinea and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Only Chad and the Central African Republic had ratified it.

Presentation by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa

Small arms and light weapons

128. The illicit trade in and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons continued to have a negative impact on several Central African countries. The States concerned were facing challenges in managing and finding lasting solutions to the problem. In several parts of the subregion, the persistent diversion of weapons and their ammunition remained a major issue.

129. The Arms Trade Treaty and the Kinshasa Convention were important instruments for controlling and combating the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Central Africa. The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa encouraged the States members of the Committee that had not yet done so to ratify both instruments.

130. The Centre welcomed the fact that combating the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons was included in the United Nations Great Lakes Regional Strategic Framework, formally launched in March 2016 by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The Centre stood ready to contribute, together with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other partners, to the implementation of that strategy.

131. Within the framework of the sixth meeting of the States Parties to the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held from 6 to 10 June 2016 in New York, it was notable that only 12 African States had submitted their reports on the implementation of that instrument, including only one State member of the Committee. Nevertheless, transparency and sharing information on issues related to small arms and light weapons were key concepts in combating illicit proliferation. The Centre urged all States members of the Committee to maintain and enhance their participation in that confidence-building measure.

132. In order to assist States members of the Committee to deal with trafficking in and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, the Centre had carried out the following activities:

(a) As indicated at the previous meeting of the Committee, the Centre and the UNDP Subregional Office for Africa had implemented an evaluation project on small arms and light weapons in nine countries, namely, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger, Nigeria and Senegal. The survey was part of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel. The results of the survey had been discussed and validated at a regional workshop in February 2016. The survey had revealed that physical security and stockpile management of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition held by Governments was a very important issue. With regard to regional trends in the face of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, the survey had also revealed the institutional, legislative and geographical challenges that the States in question were facing. The survey had once again demonstrated the importance of the existence and implementation of institutions to coordinate efforts to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, including the allocation of appropriate means, the adoption of a national action plan and the strengthening of legislative and judicial frameworks. In that regard, it was worth recalling that a draft guide for the harmonization of national legislations had been submitted to the ECCAS secretariat in May 2015 for consultation and finalization.

(b) The Centre was providing support for improved physical security and stockpile management in the Sahel region. In March 2016, a project had been officially launched with a regional conference organized by the Centre and Wilton Park. For the time being, the Centre was organizing, jointly with national focal points and committees, national consultations on the issue of physical security and stockpile management, including on the legislative aspect. For Chad, the only State

of the six beneficiary countries that was a member of the Committee, consultations would take place by early July 2016.

(c) In order to build the capacities of francophone African diplomats and experts to participate in negotiations on disarmament and grasp the major issues of disarmament, the Centre was drafting a practical guide on disarmament in Africa. A validation workshop for the guide would be held in Lomé on 13 June 2016. The guide would be made available to States members of the Committee.

Weapons of mass destruction

133. In April 2016, the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and the African Union had organized a regional workshop on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), which related to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Recommendations made at the workshop included the need to reinforce national efforts for implementation of the resolution. It should be recalled that 13 African States had not yet submitted their initial reports on implementation of the resolution, including three States members of the Committee.

134. The representative of the Centre reiterated the readiness of the Centre to make its expertise and resources available to States members of the Committee.

Recommendations

135. The Committee invited all States that had not yet ratified the Kinshasa Convention to do so as soon as possible, so that it could enter into force. The Committee indicated that only one member State's ratification was needed for the Convention to enter into force.

136. While recalling that only two member States (Central African Republic and Chad) were States parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, the Committee invited member States to sign and ratify the Treaty as soon as possible.

137. The Committee invited all member States to provide an update, at each meeting of the Committee, on the ratification process of the instruments listed above, and on the implementation of all the instruments relating to disarmament and arms limitation programmes, including small arms and light weapons.

VII. Combating armed violence and terrorism in Central Africa, including Boko Haram

Combating Boko Haram: situational analysis

138. The representative of the Lake Chad Basin Commission said that the Boko Haram sect had, since its establishment in 2002, gradually become a regional threat, causing serious disruption to the agricultural and pastoral activities around the Lake Chad Basin. The use of children forced to act as suicide bombers, the killing of civilians, the taking of hostages and, more specifically, the abduction of hundreds of schoolgirls in Chibok, Nigeria, in April 2014, had sparked strong indignation throughout the world and widespread condemnation that had subsequently resulted in the determination to fight relentlessly against the terrorist group.

139. The Paris Summit of 17 May 2014 on security in Nigeria, attended by the Heads of State of Benin, Cameroon, Chad, France, the Niger and Nigeria, as well as

representatives of the United States of America, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the European Union, had served as a catalyst for regional and international mobilization against Boko Haram.

140. At the regional level, Heads of State and Government of the Lake Chad Basin Commission and Benin, gathered at an extraordinary summit on 7 October 2014 in Niamey, had made the strong decision to combat Boko Haram in synergy, wherever it appeared. To that end, the resolutions that they had adopted included developing a common strategy against the terrorist threat in the Commission area, and strengthening the operational and intelligence capacities and coordination of the Multinational Joint Task Force.

141. At an extraordinary summit held on 11 June 2015 in Abuja, Heads of State and Government of the Lake Chad Basin Commission and Benin had approved the Concept of Operations and related documents for the Task Force to combat the Boko Haram terrorist group as well as the common strategy to fight the terrorist threat in the Commission area, prepared following numerous meetings of experts and ministers. They had also endorsed the immediate deployment of general staff for the Task Force in N'Djamena, in order to meet the human, logistical and financial needs, and appointments to three positions of authority within the general staff of the Task Force.

142. With a view to implementing the Task Force, the chiefs of staff of the armies of States members of the Lake Chad Basin Commission and Benin, gathered at a special session on 20 August 2015 in N'Djamena, had decided, inter alia, on the immediate deployment of troops in their areas of responsibility in order to enable the Force Commander to conduct his transfer of authority tour. In that regard, ceremonies for the transfer of authority from national troops to the Task Force had been organized as part of a tour conducted by the Force Commander in Baga and Mora on 6 and 8 September 2015, respectively, and in Bagasola on 11 January 2016.

143. Implementation of the Task Force was now under way. The joint general staff had reached their full complement and had been operational since 3 August 2015, with the installation of temporary headquarters in Farcha N'Djamena. Sectors and subsectors were deployed and conducting operations against Boko Haram fighters in their respective areas of responsibility, in accordance with the mission establishment phase and in coordination with the different national forces. Implementation of the mandate of the Task Force would continue under the new vision that had arisen from the second summit on regional security, held in Abuja on 14 May 2016. In addition to military operations, humanitarian and development components were now fully integrated in the fight against the Boko Haram terrorist group.

144. The fight against Boko Haram had thus sparked synergy of action on the part of the States members of the Lake Chad Basin Commission and Benin. It had effectively contributed to the strengthening of military cooperation and subregional integration. The tireless efforts and sacrifices made by those countries to eliminate that threat to regional security were very commendable and brought hope to the populations. The implementation of the Multinational Joint Task Force therefore provided a clear example of African unity in action. The spirit of African solidarity, particularly among Central African countries for Commission countries that had fallen victim to the terrorist activities of Boko Haram, was commendable, as was the multifaceted support of the African Union, the European Union and bilateral partners, including France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. It

was nevertheless to be hoped that the pledges of support made, including at the donors' conference for the Task Force on 1 February 2016 in Addis Ababa, would be implemented as soon as possible and that the meeting between ECCAS and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on a common transregional strategy would finally take place.

145. The representative of the Multinational Joint Task Force gave a comprehensive presentation on the security and humanitarian situations in the areas affected by Boko Haram, the current capacities of Boko Haram and the Task Force operations against it since January 2016. The presentation is contained in section V, part B, of the present report. In discussions with States members of the Committee, the following points were clarified:

- The ideological goal of Boko Haram was to create a caliphate. The inability to achieve that goal had accentuated the criminalization of the terrorist group;
- It was extremely difficult, even impossible, to negotiate with Boko Haram owing to the lack of an interlocutor and a credible or reasonable agenda;
- Boko Haram had support beyond even the regions of West Africa and Central Africa;
- Boko Haram was spreading by taking advantage of people's ignorance and their socioeconomic grievances. The response to Boko Haram could not be based solely on security;
- The Multinational Joint Task Force did not detain Boko Haram fighters or manage the weapons recovered; national authorities were responsible for those tasks.

Implementation of the Road Map for Counter-Terrorism and Non-Proliferation of Arms in Central Africa

146. The fight against terrorism and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons had been one of the main concerns at the Committee's previous meeting. At the current meeting, all States members of the Committee had proposed a common vision of urgent measures to combat the Boko Haram terrorist group, whose expansion in the subregion was of increasing concern.

147. That common vision had been set out in the regional strategy on counter-terrorism and non-proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Central Africa. The aforementioned strategy was consistent with commitments related to implementing the Declaration on a Road Map for Counter-Terrorism and Non-Proliferation of Arms in Central Africa, adopted at the thirty-third meeting of the Committee, held in Bangui in December 2011. The development of that regional strategy reflected increased awareness by States in the region of the challenges posed by new threats whose eradication would require a comprehensive and concerted approach.

148. The strategy stemmed from a desire to seek concerted solutions against terrorism at the regional level and incorporated the transnational vision of synergy based on existing international mechanisms. Its implementation would facilitate the development of national strategies to combat the threat.

149. A document inspired by the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the regional strategy to combat terrorism and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Central Africa, adopted in Libreville on 26 November 2015, focused on four basic pillars: prevention, protection, prosecution and response.

150. It took into account measures to address the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, as well as those relating to strengthening the capacity of States to respond to it collectively, efficiently and sustainably. The strategy also highlighted the importance of respecting human rights and the rule of law as the fundamental basis of combating terrorism.

151. In that regard, the strategy emphasized the need for States to strengthen mechanisms for cooperation in the areas of customs, police, economy and social life at the national, subregional, regional and international levels.

152. To mark their commitment to the strategy, participants had issued a statement expressing their decision to ensure its implementation. They had also undertaken to provide regular monitoring of the strategy at all subsequent meetings of the Committee. Representatives of the 11 member States believed that that obligation was necessary, given the criminal acts of Boko Haram against two States members of the Committee, Cameroon and Chad, and the terrorist risks faced by the other member States. They took that opportunity to renew their support to the States concerned.

153. Furthermore, at the last meeting of the Committee, member States had endorsed the holding of a conference in Cameroon to launch the strategy. That would provide the impetus to create the synergies essential for overcoming the threat.

Recommendations

154. The Committee encouraged the ECCAS secretariat to redouble its efforts to hold a joint summit with ECOWAS with a view to developing a joint strategy to combat Boko Haram, in accordance with the decisions taken by the Heads of State at the extraordinary summit of COPAX held in Yaoundé in February 2015.

155. The Committee recommended stepping up inter-agency cooperation (UNOCA, regional coordination against terrorism, ECCAS, ECOWAS, the Central African Economic and Monetary Community, the Lake Chad Basin Commission and the Interregional Coordination Centre for Maritime Safety and Security in the Gulf of Guinea) to synergize actions for the implementation of the regional strategy.

156. The Committee recommended that UNOCA should consult with Cameroon on the holding of a conference to launch the strategy as soon as possible.

VIII. Maritime piracy and security

157. The report by the ECCAS secretariat at the previous meeting of the Committee had presented the milestones reached up to the activation of the Regional Centre for Maritime Security in Central Africa (CRESMAC) in October 2014, and had discussed the progress made by the Interregional Coordination Centre in Yaoundé,

where in February 2016 the heads of institutions (ECCAS, ECOWAS and the Gulf of Guinea Commission) had discussed the work submitted by the launch team.

Regional Centre for Maritime Security in Central Africa

158. The ECCAS secretariat had submitted to the members of the Defence and Security Commission of Central Africa, gathered in Libreville on 12 March 2016, a number of cases related to countering piracy in the maritime area of Central Africa. Those cases included the following:

Functioning of the Regional Centre for Maritime Security in Central Africa

159. CRESMAC was an entity of the ECCAS secretariat that had commenced its operations and whose posts were progressively being filled. In terms of staffing, taking into account the current funding of CRESMAC, four States (Cameroon, Chad, Congo and Gabon) had already filled their posts, two others (Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo) were in the process of doing so and three (the Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea and Sao Tome and Principe) had not yet reached a decision.

160. Financially, only a few States had paid their contributions to launch the activities of CRESMAC.

161. Operationally, thanks to technical equipment offered by the United States and the European Union in support of the host State (Congo), CRESMAC was working with the Multinational Maritime Coordination Centre for Zone D, which was already operational, and some maritime operations centres.

162. CRESMAC was therefore able to produce a maritime image enabling the tracking of vessels equipped with an automatic identification system and to participate in multinational exercises with partners in the Gulf of Guinea. Nonetheless, challenges remained, including:

- The ineffectiveness of the funding mechanism adopted by the Council of Ministers of ECCAS, following a committee review of the resource mobilization strategy and acceptance by the Central African Shippers' Council;
- The unavailability of the launch budget approved by a Council of Ministers meeting held in N'Djamena in 2010;
- The fact that certain posts had not been filled.
- The non-activation of the Multinational Maritime Coordination Centre for Zone A.

Activation of the Multinational Maritime Coordination Centre for Zone A

163. To implement the Gulf of Guinea security strategy, ECCAS maritime space had been divided into two zones that both included a pilot State:

- Zone D: Cameroon (host State), Equatorial Guinea and Sao Tome and Principe;
- Zone A: Angola (host State), Congo and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

164. The Multinational Maritime Coordination Centre for Zone D had been operational since 2009, while the Zone A was still pending. To activate it, a suggestion had been made to hold the kick-off meeting in Angola that year with the financial support of the host State (Angola), as had been done for Zone D.

Draft operational maritime security plan, SECMAR 3

165. In view of the need to comply with the Kinshasa Protocol and to advance the Yaoundé Code of Conduct towards its binding phase, the Committee reviewed with interest the SECMAR 3 draft operational plan whose ultimate objective was to cover the entire ECCAS maritime space (Zone A and Zone D). A meeting to validate the related documents had been scheduled in Pointe-Noire in the Congo, and the ECCAS secretariat was in the process of seeking funding for that meeting. It had also been noted that:

- While the operational means (vessels, aircraft, base port and home base) had been defined in the Kinshasa Protocol, formal consent had not yet been given by the contributing States.
- No stocktaking meeting of the SECMAR 2 plan had been held since 12 February 2012. One should be held under the auspices of the Pointe-Noire meeting.

Draft cooperation framework between the Regional Centre for Maritime Security in Central Africa and the Interregional Coordination Centre for Maritime Safety and Security in the Gulf of Guinea

166. The Committee was briefed on the need to develop a cooperation framework for CRESMAC, the Interregional Coordination Centre and partners and economic operators in the maritime sector. Such a framework should help to clarify the practical modalities of cooperation, collaboration and interaction among the various structures. The overall aspects of maritime safety and security in the ECCAS area were considered highly dependent on effective implementation of CRESMAC and cooperation with the Interregional Coordination Centre.

167. In early May 2016, the ECCAS secretariat had dispatched a technical mission of ECCAS secretariat managers to CRESMAC headquarters in order to develop those collaborative mechanisms and prepare a meeting of national naval chiefs of staff, who would review all of the files and adopt a road map activating the Multinational Maritime Coordination Centre for Zone A and the maritime operations centres.

Interregional Coordination Centre for Maritime Safety and Security in the Gulf of Guinea

168. A special session of the Annual Meeting of Senior Officials of the Interregional Coordination Centre had taken place in Yaoundé on 12 February 2016, preceded by a meeting of experts to review the work carried out by the launch team. The heads of the three institutions had participated. Important decisions had been made in order to accelerate the effective launch of the Interregional Coordination Centre. The following points were noted, inter alia:

Increasing power

169. Senior officials from the Interregional Coordination Centre had mentioned the option of progressive operation of the Centre, with a start-up phase comprising a total of 26 people, an intermediate phase and a cruise phase with 41 people.

Recruitment

170. The heads of the institutions had established a joint committee for the recruitment of the Centre's statutory and professional staff. Regarding statutory staff, ECCAS would need to fill three of the seven statutory posts.

171. The ECCAS secretariat had submitted the question of distributing those three posts to members of the Defence and Security Commission. The latter had preferred to leave that matter to the ECCAS secretariat, which was in the process of implementing instructions from Heads of State. The ECCAS secretariat had written to the three States selected for the first rotation: Angola, Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea.

Resource mobilization

172. Senior officials from the Interregional Coordination Centre had adopted the Centre's budget for the second half of 2016 and the budget estimate for 2017. Those budgets amounted to 930 million CFA francs and 1.736 billion CFA francs, respectively.

173. They had agreed to involve member States in mobilizing the budget for the second half of 2016, while mobilizing the estimated budget for 2017 should be the subject of an appropriate mobilization strategy requiring the contribution of partners and other third-party contributors as well as member States.

174. A joint committee comprising members of the three institutions had therefore been set up to develop the strategy, which would be presented at the conference of partners, third-party contributors and member States on 26 and 27 July 2016 in Yaoundé.

175. At the initiative of the ECCAS secretariat, the Committee had met at the headquarters of the Interregional Coordination Centre and had decided to focus its efforts on the following aspects:

- Defining a resource mobilization strategy;
- Developing the programmes validated by senior officials in February 2016;
- Preparing the third meeting of partners and third-party contributors, scheduled for 26 and 27 July 2016 in Cameroon;
- Considering the practical modalities for participating in the meeting of the Group of Seven Group of Friends of the Gulf of Guinea, scheduled to take place on 6 and 7 June 2016 in Lisbon.

176. In the long term, self-funding mechanisms had been advocated for the Interregional Coordination Centre by offering products to maritime sector actors to alleviate the burden on member States. In terms of ECCAS, the secretariat had decided to send a delegation to Lisbon to lobby partners of the Group of Seven Group of Friends of the Gulf of Guinea in order to encourage them to participate in

the conference of partners and other third-party contributors, scheduled for 26 and 27 July 2016 in Cameroon. Lastly, the heads of the three institutions had committed to have the Centre's start-up team in place from July 2016.

177. The Director of CRESMAC gave an additional presentation on the history, status, operations, challenges and needs of CRESMAC. He particularly stressed the need to:

- Convene a meeting of naval chiefs of staff of ECCAS countries at CRESMAC headquarters in Pointe-Noire, with a view to developing: (i) the SECMAR 3 plan; (ii) the technical agreement between ECCAS and Zone A countries; (iii) the headquarters agreement between the Multinational Maritime Coordination Centre for Zone A and ECCAS; and (iv) a working framework between the Interregional Coordination Centre and CRESMAC;
- Activate the Multinational Maritime Coordination Centre for Zone A during 2016, in correlation with the SECMAR 3 plan;
- Replenish CRESMAC equipment;
- Finish filling CRESMAC posts;
- Activate the holding of a maritime conference in the ECCAS area;
- Relaunch the mechanism for financing the operation of CRESMAC;
- Provide training sessions, including those offered by the Interregional Maritime Security Institute in Abidjan and other centres of excellence.

178. The Coordinator of the Interregional Coordination Centre presented the history of the Yaoundé process, the various stages leading to the implementation of the Centre in July 2016, and the follow-up to the recommendations of the Yaoundé Code of Conduct signed, inter alia, by most States members of the Committee. He emphasized the financial, material and human challenges the Centre was facing a few weeks before the start of its activities.

IX. Poaching in Central Africa

179. The representative of Gabon recalled the adoption of the Libreville Declaration on combating poaching in Central Africa on 26 November 2015. He noted that the Declaration had requested the ECCAS secretariat to prepare a presentation on that issue at the forty-second meeting of the Committee.

180. The representative of Gabon recalled the adoption on 30 July 2015 of General Assembly resolution 69/314, entitled "Tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife", submitted by Gabon and Germany and co-sponsored by 70 Member States, including those of the Central African subregion, and which established a direct link between environmental, socioeconomic and security dimensions.

181. Intensifying the fight against poaching had resulted in a decrease in major offences. It was characterized by strengthening regulation, increasing prosecutions and intensifying international cooperation. In that regard, Gabon was benefiting from international assistance, including from the United Kingdom, which was training Gabonese eco-guards operating in the 12 national parks. The private sector

was also contributing, including through a partnership between Total and Compagnie des bois du Gabon.

182. The representatives of Angola, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Congo and the Democratic Republic of the Congo also shared their experience in that area. It appeared that a strong response by the security forces, combined with close regional cooperation, a robust legal and judicial framework, the involvement of affected populations and the tracking of animals using global positioning system collars — considered a best practice as implemented in Zakouma National Park in Chad — were proving to be effective measures to curb the problem.

X. Combating drug trafficking and transnational organized crime in Central Africa

183. Consideration of the item was postponed until the forty-third meeting of the Committee.

XI. Thematic discussion: National mechanisms for the management and regulation of crises and tensions in Central Africa

184. The topic had been proposed by the outgoing Chair of the Committee, Gabon, in a letter sent to all member States on 21 March 2016. Guided by an ongoing concern to establish social peace, the highest Gabonese authorities had set up strong and credible institutions aimed at ensuring political and social stability in the country. The national institutions or mechanisms designed to ease tensions, prevent various crises and resolve conflicts within society included the National Council for Democracy and the Mediator of the Republic.

185. In 1993, following electoral disputes in the aftermath of the presidential election won by the late President Omar Bongo Ondimba, and in a spirit of political dialogue, social cohesion and strengthening of the rule of law, the Paris Agreements had been signed in October 1994 by the entire Gabonese political class. On 15 April 1996, Act No. 13/96 establishing the National Council for Democracy was adopted. That Act had been enhanced by Ordinance No. 001/PR/2015 and ratified by Act No. 004/2015 of 27 June 2015, which mainly focused on its membership and tasks. The Head of State thereby offered a collaborative workspace open to diverse views which aimed to transcend dialectical contradictions through a debate of ideas.

186. The National Council for Democracy ensured the maintenance of political and social cohesion and peace and security. It provided a framework for permanent and inclusive political dialogue and a consultative body for mediation in conflicts between actors and political parties. It was responsible for the following:

- Developing and enforcing a code of conduct for use by national political actors. The code organized the behaviour of political actors during regular periods and electoral periods;
- Providing conflict mediation for political actors and parties;
- Ensuring compliance with the Paris Agreements;

- Proposing to the executive and legislative branches any action that could contribute to the promotion of democracy;
- Issuing opinions on draft texts that could contribute to the promotion of democracy, proper functioning of political parties and improvement of the electoral process.

187. The National Council for Democracy comprised:

- Leaders of legally recognized political parties;
- The Prime Minister;
- The President of the National Assembly;
- The President of the Senate;
- Former Prime Ministers;
- Former Presidents of the National Assembly;
- Former Presidents of the Senate.

188. In a submission dated 18 February 2016, the President of Gabon had noted that, despite its legal existence, the National Council for Democracy had remained in a lethargy that politicians of all political persuasions had deplored. He had therefore requested the Government to make every effort to ensure that the body was truly integrated into the institutional life of the Republic, in order for it to be active, operational and viable. The National Council had subsequently adopted a code of conduct for political parties.

189. Act No. 043/2010 of 2 May 2011 on the institution of the Mediator of Gabon stipulated that the mandate of the Mediator was to carry out the functions of mediation, consultation and rights protection with administrations, local authorities, public institutions and any other public service organization. As such, the Mediator's responsibilities included:

- Hearing complaints from any natural or legal person feeling adversely affected by the functioning of State services;
- In times of crisis, seeking solutions to restore social peace;
- Encouraging a spirit of fairness in the application of texts;
- Contributing to the modernization of public services with proposals for the simplification of procedures, administrative reform, text updates and compliance with ethical principles and rules of public service.

190. The Mediator of the Republic therefore had two main functions:

- Reviewing administrative acts and functioning of the administration;
- Arbitration and conciliation. As such, the Mediator had the authority to amicably resolve disputes between citizens and administrations or other bodies with a public service mission.

191. The Central African Republic, the Congo and Rwanda shared their experience in the area of the management and resolution of crises, which included international mechanisms under the leadership of the United Nations Security Council, regional mechanisms under the auspices of ECCAS, and national mechanisms through

inclusive dialogues, State institutions such as the Mediator of the Republic and informal and ad hoc structures. Speakers emphasized the imperatives of inclusiveness, resourcefulness and flexibility.

192. The African Union recalled that the African continent also had a peace and security architecture, including a Peace and Security Council and a Panel of the Wise.

XII. Briefings by bodies with observer status in the Committee

193. Representatives of the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa and MINUSCA gave the Committee brief overviews of their mandates and activities to promote peace and stability in Central Africa.

Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa

194. After thanking the States members of the Committee for their multifaceted support to the implementation of the mandate of the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa, the representative reviewed the situation of human rights and democracy in certain States in the subregion. The Centre welcomed the actions undertaken, with the support of many partners, including UNOCA, in the areas of capacity-building, advocacy and technical support for Governments, parliaments, national human rights institutions, electoral bodies, civil society organizations and the media in the countries of the subregion. Since the previous meeting of the Committee, the Centre had made the following comments on the thematic priorities of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for the 2014-2017 programme cycle:

Early warning and protection of human rights in situations of conflict, violence and insecurity

195. The Centre highlighted the progress made in the fight against Boko Haram and expressed its concern regarding allegations of human rights violations in Burundi. It reaffirmed the need for States to ensure defendants the right to a fair trial and to take measures conducive to respect for human dignity in the treatment of prisoners.

Incorporation of human rights into development and economic affairs, with a focus on business and human rights, and the right to land, water and housing

196. The Centre noted the need to ensure the protection of the human rights of local populations and the social responsibility of companies involved in the exploitation of natural resources, in accordance with the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

Enhancement of international human rights mechanisms and progressive development of international human rights law and standards, with a focus on improving the visibility and accessibility of international human rights mechanisms

197. The implementation of human rights conventions, recommendations of treaty bodies, the universal periodic review and special procedures of the United Nations had progressed since the Committee's previous meeting. However, the Centre drew States' attention to the need to provide the necessary resources to offices responsible

for drafting reports and monitoring the implementation of conventions and recommendations. The offices responsible for drafting reports, for example in the Central African Republic, Chad, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Gabon, reported inadequate resources for the collection of data and the preparation and timely submission of reports to human rights mechanisms of the United Nations. States must make greater efforts and establish effective national mechanisms for the drafting of reports and the follow-up to recommendations of treaty bodies and the universal periodic review. To that end, the Centre welcomed the acceptance by the Rwandan authorities of 50 recommendations from the review process that they had implemented with concrete actions, including the adoption of a road map.

198. The Centre also noted with satisfaction that, during the reporting period, Gabon and Rwanda had moved towards establishing a national mechanism for the prevention of torture.

199. The Central African Republic had established a national committee on the prevention of genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and all forms of discrimination. The Centre welcomed efforts made at that level and wished to encourage the Central African authorities to continue working in that direction by establishing a national commission on human rights. The Central African authorities were invited to participate in the interactive dialogue on the situation of human rights in the Central African Republic at the Human Rights Council. That dialogue would take place in Geneva on 28 June 2016 in the presence of the Independent Expert, Ms. Marie Thérèse Keita Bocoum, whose seventh visit was scheduled to take place from 10 to 20 June 2016.

The broadening of democracy, with a focus on public freedoms and the protection of human rights defenders

200. The Centre reiterated its call to ratify and implement the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance. It was important to recall the responsibility of States to promote and protect human rights before, during and after elections, in accordance with signed and ratified international and regional instruments. Regional consultations on the protection of civil and political rights and fundamental freedoms in electoral processes in Central Africa would take place at the end of September 2016 in Douala. States members of the Committee were invited to attend. The consultations would provide each delegation with the opportunity to present and share recent experiences, with a view to the mutual strengthening of national mechanisms to protect human rights, the holding of peaceful elections and conflict prevention in electoral processes.

201. On a general note, the Centre and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Cameroon proposed holding a preparatory meeting of delegates from States every two years to discuss and prepare the presentation of the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the activities of the Centre, and on the related resolution. That meeting could be held in parallel with meetings of the Committee in June, a few months before the submission of the report and the consideration of the resolution on the Centre in New York.

202. The Congo noted that the Centre should also report positive developments with regard to human rights in Central Africa, such as the abolition of the death penalty enshrined in the new Constitution of the Congo.

United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

203. The representative of MINUSCA shared with the Committee the Mission's contribution to the return to constitutional order and the end of the transitional period. During the reporting period, the Central African Republic had achieved significant milestones in its political transition.

204. The representative of MINUSCA presented the different activities carried out by the Mission, in collaboration with members of the United Nations country team and national and international partners, to promote a political and security environment conducive to the holding of the elections. In addition to significant logistical support throughout the country, the Mission had, for example, provided technical support to the National Electoral Authority both at the headquarters level in Bangui and in the field through 17 regional electoral offices. With regard to political support, the Mission had organized briefing sessions for presidential candidates in collaboration with the Authority. The police and the MINUSCA force had contributed to the peaceful conduct of the elections. Significant efforts had been undertaken by the United Nations, in particular by UNHCR, to enable refugees in neighbouring States to participate in the electoral process.

205. The representative of MINUSCA commended the prompt establishment of the new Government, which had immediately started work. He welcomed the President's initial contact with the armed groups and noted that MINUSCA had provided logistical support to that dialogue. He also recalled that, following the end of the transition, a strategic review of the mandate of the Mission was ongoing and that recommendations would be presented for the renewal of the mandate, which would expire on 31 July 2016. The representative also welcomed the adoption on 17 May 2016 of an order establishing a technical committee for the preparation of the new mutual commitment framework in the Central African Republic.

206. MINUSCA comprised 1,200 civilian staff members, 2,034 police officers and 10,352 soldiers deployed throughout the country, particularly in the Mission's 12 field offices. The protection of civilians remained the priority focus of the Mission. In response to potential threats of physical violence against civilians during the electoral period, the Mission had mainstreamed the protection of civilians into its integrated electoral security plan. More generally, the protection of civilians throughout the country had remained, and would remain, the Mission's key priority.

207. MINUSCA had supported the Strategic Committee for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration and Security Sector Reform, comprising national and international partners, in implementing relevant recommendations of the Bangui Forum. MINUSCA had provided logistical and technical support to the establishment and the work of the ad hoc national committee on the draft national security policy in collaboration with other representatives of the international community involved in the process. On 17 March 2016, the Strategic Committee had endorsed the draft national security policy. MINUSCA had also provided technical and logistical support to the efforts of the transitional authorities to make progress on disarmament, demobilization, repatriation and reintegration. The launch of the pre-disarmament, demobilization and reintegration phase, in preparation for the national disarmament, demobilization, repatriation and reintegration programme, had contributed to reducing violence in the communities concerned and injecting money into local economies. To date, approximately 3,000 former combatants had

already been registered and the Mission had already disbursed US$ 6 million for the programme.

208. The representative of MINUSCA confirmed the destruction in 2015 and 2016, by the United Nations Mine Action Service, of more than 165,000 unexploded ordnance and 193 tons of commercial explosives, and the neutralization of 1,537 explosives and various shells. The Mission had renovated armouries in five police, gendarmerie and prison facilities. It had also completed construction of an armoury accommodating up to 1,000 weapons and a temporary depot to store hazardous munitions away from the population. The Mission had also carried out programmes, reaching 230,000 persons, to raise awareness of the risk of weapons and explosives.

209. The representative called on all participants to remain committed to working alongside Central Africans and requested all national and international stakeholders to support the new Government in the necessary reforms in governance, security, rule of law, human rights, the fight against impunity and national reconciliation. Lastly, the representative suggested that the Committee should include the theme of migration in the agenda of its forty-third meeting.

210. Delegates emphasized the need for regional support to the recovery of the Central African Republic.

XIII. Report by the secretariat of the Economic Community of Central African States on institutional developments in subregional peace and security structures and mechanisms and on the development of strategic partnerships

211. The representative of the ECCAS secretariat explained that finalization of COPAX, which predated the establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, was still under way. The Central Africa Early Warning Mechanism was operational, while the Defence and Security Commission had been holding regular meetings. The Central Africa Multinational Force, certified by the African Union, was also operational. A workshop would be held in Yaoundé from 13 to 15 June 2016 on the revision of the COPAX texts, pursuant to the decision of the ECCAS Summit of Heads of State and Government which had been held at N'Djamena on 25 May 2015.

212. The ECCAS secretariat had recently renewed its partnership with UNOCA and established a new partnership with ICGLR, in addition to its long-standing partnerships with the African Union and the European Union.

XIV. Report by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women on the status of implementation in Central Africa of Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1889 (2009)

Situation of women

213. Women in the Central African region had been affected in various ways by the cycles of conflict and insecurity. In addition to their disproportionate presence

among the victims, displaced persons and refugees, women had been the targets of sexual violence and were often used as a weapon of war. In Cameroon and Chad, Boko Haram was massacring civilians and abducting women and children during the looting of villages. As populations had been driven to migrate, many refugee and displaced women and children were facing specific threats, making them vulnerable to sexual and gender-based violence.

214. A strong cultural resistance to gender equality in the region had also contributed to a high rate of gender-based violence. The stigmatization of women victims of violence had resulted in very low rates of reporting to the police, while women who reported violence faced difficulties in accessing justice. In refugee camps, women and girls were suffering from inadequate sanitary conditions and supplies, and a lack of maternal and reproductive health services. The enrolment of girls in primary school was 17 points below the global rate in areas affected by conflict. At the political level, women in the region were systematically excluded from formal peace processes. The complete absence of women from the delegations of parties to the formal peace process in the Central African Republic was one such example.

Reasons to involve women in peace and security

215. Fifteen years after the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), in 2015 the Secretary-General of the United Nations had requested a comprehensive study to evaluate the implementation of the resolution and to chart the way forward. According to the study, the inclusion of women in peace processes had created an impetus for the commencement, resumption or finalization of negotiations. The analysis of 40 peace processes since the end of the Cold War showed that, when women had been able to exercise significant influence over the process, as had been the case in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Kenya, it was more likely to result in an agreement that would be implemented. Moreover, peace agreements were 64 per cent more likely to succeed if representatives of civil society were involved. That reality had yet to reach peace processes in Central African countries, where peace remained the preserve of male leaders. The results of the comprehensive study also suggested that the conflict-affected countries that subsequently sought to engage most quickly in the economic recovery and poverty reduction process were those with the highest degree of empowerment of women. In Rwanda, initiatives to increase the leadership of women farmers and their access to mentoring services had led to an increase in production, allowing women to better contribute to national food security and improve their status in the community.

216. The implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions in Central Africa was supported by a broad framework of instruments and policies relevant to women and peace and security at all levels. At the continental level, that framework included the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol) and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa. In 2002, the mandate of ECCAS had also been expanded to include the promotion of peace, security and stability.

Current state of implementation: participation and contribution of women in key sectors in Central Africa

217. To date, the implementation of mandates on women and peace and security remained unequal. While progress had been noted in some areas, such as efforts to increase women's representation in the security sector in some countries, many challenges remained. Women's inclusion in peace processes and violence against women in conflict and post-conflict settings remained major challenges. Currently, only three countries in Central Africa had national action plans to guide the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000): Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda.

Protection

218. Sexual and gender-based violence continued to threaten the safety of women in Central African countries, particularly those affected by conflict. Since the beginning of the crisis in the Central African Republic, many observers and field studies had highlighted the atrocities against women, including sexual violence. The violence that was common in households and refugee settlement sites had caused trauma that had not been addressed by the authorities, such as HIV infections and pregnancies resulting from rape. In eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, sexual violence continued to threaten the safety of women, while in Cameroon 55 per cent of women over 15 years of age claimed to have been victims of violence. To address those high rates of violence against women, many countries like Rwanda had introduced units specializing in gender-based sexual violence within their police forces, with officers trained to manage such situations.

Justice and security

219. Women remained underrepresented in the area of security in Central Africa. Only four countries had police forces in which more than 20 per cent of officers were women, while the level of representation of women in the military forces was on average 2 to 3 per cent for most Central African countries. However, positive developments had been observed in some countries that had adopted national action plans for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). In recent years, the judiciary had seen some positive trends in the representation of women. In most countries where data were available, women constituted between 20 and 40 per cent of that sector. In Burundi, for example, women made up 25 per cent of the judiciary, while in Rwanda 70 per cent of High Court judges were women.

Political participation

220. Political participation was one of the pillars of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). In the Central African region, Burundi and Rwanda had established specific quotas for the representation of women in parliament, while other countries had allocated a certain number of seats for women. In January 2014, Burundi and Rwanda were in the top 30 countries in the world in terms of the percentage of women in ministerial positions. In Rwanda, 56 per cent of parliamentarians and 37 per cent of ministers were women. Even in countries that had not passed laws on quotas, the representation of women had increased, as in Cameroon, where 31 per cent of parliamentarians were women.

Civil society engagement

221. The engagement of civil society was vital for an inclusive and sustainable peace process. In the countries of the Central African region, some progress had been made to increase the participation of civil society women's networks, although a more significant commitment remained to be made. In Burundi, women had set up a national network of women mediators that had proved effective in preventing violence at the local level, mitigating the impact of political crises on populations. The network had intervened in over 3,000 local conflicts between January and May 2014. In Rwanda, civil society had been represented in the working group on the national action plan by the Profemme-Twese Hamwe umbrella organization and the Collective of Human Rights Leagues and Associations. Those two organizations accounted for 74 per cent of the working group and had played an important role in the development and adoption of the national action plan. In the Central African Republic, women's non-governmental organizations had been at the forefront of support for victims of gender-based sexual violence resulting from the conflict.

Conclusion

222. Despite some progress in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and related mandates in the region, many challenges remained. Women were still on the periphery of decision-making in peace processes, operating mostly informally. Sexual and gender-based violence remained present, and the lack of reliable data and the fact that violence often went unreported were obstacles to resolving that problem. The importance of gender-related reforms within security sector institutions was also central to ensure that the safety priorities of women in conflict and post-conflict situations could be taken into account. The fact that most countries in the region had not adopted a national action plan to facilitate the implementation of mandates on women, peace and security prevented them from developing coherent and coordinated national responses.

223. Continued investment in building the capacity of women's organizations remained a priority in the region, particularly at the local level. Reliable funding was required to enable those organizations to provide services to conflict-affected populations and support the empowerment of women. The support of the United Nations and regional and international organizations was also of crucial importance in that regard.

Recommendation

224. The Committee encouraged its member States to take the necessary steps with a view to adopting national action plans for the effective implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and to report at each meeting of the Committee on the progress made in that regard.

XV. Review of the financial situation of the Committee: implementation of the Libreville Declaration by member States

225. The secretariat distributed to Committee members a table on the status of contributions to the Trust Fund since its establishment (see annex 2). Only Angola and the Congo were current with their contributions to the Trust Fund. Member States expressed their regret over the current situation and reaffirmed their

commitment to make their annual contributions to the Trust Fund. The Committee secretariat urged member States to submit any documents relating to any recent contributions. States members of the Committee adopted a declaration on a binding annual contribution (see annex 3).

226. The banking details of the Trust Funds were as follows:

Bank: J.P. Morgan Chase, International Agencies Banking

Address: 1166 Avenue of the Americas, 17th Floor, New York, NY 10017, United States of America

Account Name: United Nations General Trust Fund Account

Account Number: 485-001969

ABA routing number: 021-000-021

Swift Code: CHASU33

Beneficiary: SQA Trust Fund of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa

XVI. Venue and date of the next meeting

227. The Committee decided that the forty-third ministerial meeting would be held in Sao Tome. The exact dates would be announced subsequently through diplomatic channels.

XVII. Other matters

228. Equatorial Guinea suggested that the African Centre for Studies and Research on Terrorism, the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa and INTERPOL should be invited to the Committee's next meeting.

229. The States members of the Committee encouraged ECCAS to develop and continue cooperation with ECOWAS on security issues, including counter-terrorism.

XVIII. Adoption of the report of the forty-second ministerial meeting

230. The Committee adopted the present report, including the Bangui Declaration (see annex 3), on 10 June 2016 in Bangui.

XIX. Expression of thanks

On behalf of the Committee, the following expression of thanks was read out by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Chad, Ms. Madeleine Alingué:

> "We, the ministers and members of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, gathered on the occasion of the forty-second ministerial meeting of the Committee, held from 6 to 10 June 2016 in Bangui:

- Reaffirm our attachment to the ideals of peace, security and stability that are so necessary for our respective peoples and for the socioeconomic development of our subregion;
- Welcome the efforts made by our countries, individually and collectively, to promote peace, security, stability and development;
- Welcome the atmosphere of conviviality, brotherhood and mutual trust which has prevailed throughout our work;
- Express our sincere thanks and our profound gratitude to Mr. Faustin-Archange Touadera, President of the Republic, and to the Government and people of the Central African Republic, for the warm and fraternal welcome that we have received during our stay in the Central African Republic."

Annex 1

Status of implementation of the recommendations of the forty-first meeting of the Committee

Recommendations	*Body responsible*	*Status*
All States that have not yet done so should ratify the Kinshasa Convention as soon as possible, so that it may enter into force.	Member States	According to the United Nations, no instrument of ratification has been deposited since 27 November 2015.
All States that have not yet done so should sign and ratify the Arms Trade Treaty.	Member States	According to the United Nations, no instrument of ratification has been deposited since 27 November 2015.
A joint summit should be held with ECOWAS with a view to developing a joint strategy to combat Boko Haram, in accordance with the decisions taken by the Heads of State at the extraordinary summit of COPAX held in Yaoundé in February 2015.	ECCAS secretariat/ member States	Under way
Member States should take the necessary measures to remain current with their financial obligations to the Committee and in keeping with the spirit of the Libreville Declaration, including through gradual clearance over the period covering the next two Committee meetings, and by December 2016 at the latest. It was noted that the amount of annual contributions to the Trust Fund has been set at a minimum of US$ 10,000.	Member States	Only the Congo has contributed US$ 50,000 to the Trust Fund since 27 November 2015. Only Angola and the Congo are current with their contributions.
A specific thematic debate should be included on the agenda of future meetings. That theme will be chosen in advance of each meeting by member States and submitted to the Secretariat.	Member States	At the initiative of Gabon, a thematic debate on "national mechanisms for the management and regulation of crises and tensions in Central Africa" will be held on Tuesday, 7 June.

Annex 2

Table showing the status of contributions to the Trust Fund since its establishment

Year	*Member States (in alphabetical order)*	*Amount in USD*
1998	Germany	48 996
2015	Angola	40 000
2011	Angola	10 000
2010	Angola	10 000
1997	Cyprus	1 000
1997	Gabon	1 932
2012	Gabon	30 000
1998	Ireland	15 000
1998	Italy	30 000
1996	Japan	600 000
1998	Norway	30 355
1998	Portugal	10 000
2016	Congo	50 000
2011	Congo	10 961
2010	Congo	9 299
2002	Czech Republic	15 000
1998	United Kingdom	35 000
2011	Sao Tome and Principe	25 273
1999	Sweden	10 000
1997	Chad	1 742
Total		**982 817**
Balance as at 6 June 2016		**116 267**

Annex 3

Declarations

Bangui Declaration

We, the ministers and heads of delegation of the States members of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, gathered in Bangui, Central African Republic, from 6 to 10 June 2016, on the occasion of the forty-second ministerial meeting of the Committee,

Having reviewed the geopolitical and security situation in the Central African subregion,

1. Note with satisfaction the return to constitutional order in the Central African Republic;

2. Welcome the improved security situation throughout the country despite the numerous challenges still to be overcome, which call for vigilance on the part of the States members of the Committee and the entire international community;

3. Encourage the Central African authorities to spare no effort in the pursuit of peace and the restoration and consolidation of State authority throughout the country;

4. Pay tribute to the people of the Central African Republic, who demonstrated, peacefully and enthusiastically, their will to return to democratic order and to overcome the crisis through their participation in the constitutional referendum and the presidential and parliamentary elections held in December 2015 and February and March 2016;

5. Commend the transitional authorities for doing everything in their power to hold successful democratic elections;

6. Congratulate Mr. Faustin Archange Touadera on his election as President of the Central African Republic, reiterate our full support for the accomplishment of his task of rebuilding the country and commend his commitment to the national reconciliation process;

7. Urge all political actors and civil society organizations to participate in a dialogue and engage wholeheartedly in the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation process with a view to playing their full role in strengthening democracy and peacebuilding;

8. Encourage the Government of the Central African Republic to reactivate the National Commission against the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons;

9. Welcome the commitment of the States members of the Economic Community of Central African States, which have stood shoulder to shoulder with the Central African Republic since the beginning of the crisis;

10. Express our gratitude to Mr. Denis Sassou Nguesso, President of the Congo, for his role as International Mediator in the Central African Republic crisis;

11. Express our gratitude to the Economic Community of Central African States, the African Union, the European Union, the United Nations, technical and financial partners and all those who, directly or indirectly, provided various forms of support to the Central African Republic and urge them to remain engaged and to continue their efforts to support the process of reconstruction, peacebuilding and restoration of the rule of law.

Bangui, 10 June 2016

Declaration regarding a binding annual contribution from States members of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa

We, the ministers and heads of delegation of the States members of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, gathered in Bangui, Central African Republic, from 6 to 10 June 2016, on the occasion of the forty-second ministerial meeting of the Committee,

Deeply concerned by the Committee's financial situation and by the inadequacy of the contributions to the Committee's Trust Fund,

Bearing in mind the Libreville Declaration on the Trust Fund adopted at the twenty-eighth ministerial meeting of the Committee on 8 May 2009,

Request our Heads of State and Government:

(a) To rule on the binding nature of the contribution from each State member of the Committee with a view to ensuring its optimal and efficient functioning;

(b) To set the amount of this contribution at US$ 10,000 per State per year.

Bangui, 10 June 2016